

CANVASSING KANSAS

AN UPDATE ON ELECTION NEWS IN KANSAS

DECEMBER 2015

From the Desk of the Secretary



Dear Kansas Election Officers,

As the New Year approaches and we reflect on 2015 we recognize that it has been a year filled with numerous challenges and accomplishments for our state. There is much to be proud of. The county election officers and the secretary of state's office have accomplished a great deal throughout the last year. These achievements include the grand opening of the new Shawnee County Elections Office, a state of the art facility that promotes the importance and history of voting in Kansas. Furthermore, the 2015 Kansas Legislature displayed their commitment to election security by increasing penalties for election crimes and by granting independent authority to my office and to the attorney general's office to prosecute those crimes. The first set of prosecutions were filed in October, and we have already obtained one guilty plea. More prosecutions will be filed in the near future. Lastly, we have proudly watched one of our elections commissioners, Brian Newby, be elevated to the position of Executive Director of the EAC. This is a testament to the quality of people administering our state's elections. As we look ahead to the challenges of the 2016 presidential election year, I am confident of our state's ability to continue to administer the most secure elections in the nation.

I want to express my sincere gratitude to each of you for all that you have done throughout 2015. I truly appreciate your hard work and am grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside you. I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas and hope you have a happy and safe New Year.

God Bless,

Kris W. Kobach, Kansas Secretary of State

Secretary Kobach launches Civics Program

In 2012 the Kansas Secretary of State's Office launched *CyberCivics*, an accessible and educational website for Kansas citizens to learn more about the history, design, achievements, and responsibilities of government, both on a national and local level. The website's topics include Kansas history and statehood, geography, government, famous Kansans, with each section concluding with an online quiz to check your knowledge of what you've learned.

To further promote civics education across Kansas, Secretary Kobach has launched the *CyberCivics* Completion Program. This pilot program is available for students who complete the *CyberCivics* curriculum and pass the Comprehensive Exam. Students who complete the entire curriculum and score a 90% or higher on the Comprehensive Exam will be recognized by the Secretary of State's Office with a Certificate of Achievement celebrating their accomplishment! The Completion Program is currently available to students in the Topeka area or at the request of educational sponsors statewide. Students between the ages of 10 and 14 are eligible to participate with their primary educator's sponsorship so for more details on how your student can participate, email Craig McCullah at media@sos.ks.gov.



Our Civic Duty

As a new year is about to begin, America turns its' attention to a Presidential Election. There has been and will be a lot of coverage on the various candidates for President, and this coverage is well deserved. In addition, there will be many candidates running for state and local offices across the state. Members of Congress, the Kansas Legislature, county officials, township officials, and judges will all be elected or retained this year and each of these offices have great impact on your daily life and the lives of children and grandchildren. Often times, we don't see enough candidates for local offices. However, our form of government at all levels is dependent on active, citizen engagement. Understanding running for public office may not be everyone, I would encourage everyone to consider it. If not, take time to learn about the candidates and issues that affect you, your neighborhood, your county, and your state. In today's world, it is much easier to find information on candidates, and to reach out and contact them directly. We live in the greatest nation on earth and we have the best form of government on earth but, that form of government is dependent on active participation at all levels. Democracy is not a spectator sport. Get involved and don't forget to VOTE!

